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M. Scuffil: *Experiments in Comparative Intonation: A Case-Study of English and German*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1982.

In the international context of prosody research, the British tradition of intonational analysis is somewhat exceptional. Most British work in this field starts by constructing a taxonomy of rather holistic intonational units (fall; fall-rise; etc.), which can then be associated with meanings or functions. By contrast, American and European studies of intonation have generally preferred to describe contours as sequences of more basic units (levels; features). Moreover, the phonetic tradition of instrumental studies of prosody, which is dominant in America and Europe, and the influence of which can be seen even in linguistic theories of prosody on both continents, is much less strong in Britain. Perhaps as a corollary of this, the strong experimental bias of much American and European prosody research is also absent from the British tradition.

Within the context of British prosody research, the present volume is thus somewhat exceptional. It is typically British in that the intonational repertoire under investigation comprises falls, fall-rises, and the like; but it is quite untypical in that the methodology is experimental rather than descriptive.

Essentially, the book is no more than a presentation of uninterpreted data. The author is unashamed about this. The first sentence of the concluding chapter, in which one might expect to find encapsulated the author's view of the importance of his contribution, reads, 'The experiments involved a total of around two hundred and fifty man-hours of participant time, and constitute one of the largest-scale experimental studies of intonation hitherto reported.' Since the book is a minimally rewritten version of the author's Ph.D. thesis (Cambridge), there is of course some additional material — Chapters 2 through 4 provide a literature overview, surveying treatments of English intonation, treatments of German intonation, and previous contrastive studies of German



and English intonation. But there is no attempt to develop a new model of intonational structure, or to provide theoretical motivation for the particular system of intonational description the author uses. Moreover, these chapters are extremely condensed and quite difficult to read, and to this reader at least they illustrate that the purpose of a literature overview in a thesis (to demonstrate that the candidate has read all the relevant works and has taken a position toward each one) is quite different from the purpose of such an overview in a book (to give the reader a lucid account of the background against which the author's research is set); the present book's introductory section serves only the former purpose. Perhaps its most disappointing feature is that it raises several important and interesting questions (e.g. 'what is the place of prosody in language?'), to which no answer is offered either here or in the empirical work reported later.

The meat of the book, therefore, is the description of the experiments. The author has obviously invested a great deal of effort in considering possible alternatives at every choice-point in experimental design and sets out in detail the reasons for each choice he made. This meticulous methodological exposition may well prove useful to others interested in engaging in similar experimentation. His particular choices led to the following procedure: (1) he chose a number of intonational contrasts in English which signify a meaning contrast of some kind — for instance, 'Yes, he will' spoken with a high falling contour on *yes* and either a rise on *will* (disagreement) or a fall (agreement); (2) he recorded each contrast on a number of different carrier sentences, in isolation, in his own voice (no acoustic measurements were performed to check the nature or degree of contrast); (3) he predicted, on the basis of his knowledge of German, that certain of the contrasts would be apparent to German listeners (where the same contrast was present in German, whether signalled intonationally or by other means), while others would not (where no such contrast could be drawn in German); (4) he then played his recordings to numbers of English native speakers and of German native speakers with varying degrees of acquaintance with English, and he required these listeners to match the various intonational versions of each sentence to written contexts, or to classify them in various dimensions. These dimensions, depending on the intonational contrast involved, varied widely — question vs. statement; factive implication or not; confident vs. anxious speaker attitude; etc.

The choice of an experimental approach to the question of cross-linguistic interpretability of intonation was in one sense validated by the very fact that not all the predictions were confirmed by the results. That is, it is not possible to predict from the presence versus absence of a



particular meaning contrast in German whether or not German native speakers will be able to interpret correctly intonational signals of such a contrast in English. In fact, in one case at least, even the English native speakers were unable to perceive the contrast the author had intended. The lack of instrumental backup unfortunately makes it impossible to tell whether this failure should be ascribed to inadequacy in the author's intuitions (because the contrast in question is specific to his dialect of English, and uncharacteristic of other dialects, or because it is specific to his speech alone), or in his recordings (because he failed to achieve adequate acoustic realisation of the contrast). Where the predictions of the German speakers' performance were not confirmed, some — rather sketchy — attempt is made to provide a post hoc explanation. No attempt is made to correlate varying English competence with perception performance.

In the concluding chapter, which is all of six and a half pages long, exactly two pages are devoted to interpretation of the experimental findings. In other words, the experiments are all the book (true to its title) offers to the reader. No new intonational insights, no new theory, but a mass of scrupulously assembled findings which, perhaps, others will later exploit.

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Fondé par Louis Gauchat, Jules Jeanjaquet et Ernest Tappolet: *Glossaire des patois de la Suisse romande*. Fascicles 72–73. Neuchâtel: Attinger; Genève: Droz; 1981–1982.

In recent issues of *Linguistics*, I had the opportunity to review fascicles 59 to 71 of the monumental *Glossaire des patois de la Suisse romande*. In the meantime, fascicle 72 (constituting pp. 617–672 of volume V, and covering the entries *devoir* to *diable*) and fascicle 73 (pp. 617–672 of volume VI, entries *épouin* to *escalier*) have appeared.

Fascicle 72 contains some very interesting items. It opens with a long article on the verb *devoir*, which can be used as an autonomous verb followed by a nominal object (cf. *devoir de l'argent*) or as a modal or temporal auxiliary. In the latter case, two meanings can be distinguished, viz. the expression of an obligatory fact (moral obligation, necessity, direct consequence, intention) and the expression of an expectation (probability, supposition, possibility). In a concluding note, the author of this article, M. Casanova, points out that the construction *devoir* + *infinitive* is slowly evinced by the construction *il* (*me, te, lui ...*) *faut* + *infinitive*.